

## JDF is real

Contributed by Tom Leyden, Esko, 2007

Joining the forces of Prism Europe with a JDF workflow server is helping Adare's packaging workflow go digital. Tom Leyden of Esko presents a case study

Adare has recently established a JDF workflow in its packaging prepress arena and is beginning to see the benefits already. According to Prism, this is the first JDF workflow with a step-and-repeat module, which helps speed up the process of getting content onto the printing plate.

"Adare has been a Prism WIN user for more than five years and we see their MIS as the hub in our workflow. Now, Prism's JDF link with our new workflow server helps us to optimise workflow and lets us work smarter, not harder," said Adare Digital Solutions Director Steve Balderson. "We are seeing substantial cost and time benefit as this project progresses."

The JDF workflow allows Adare's packaging customers to see how a job is progressing in real time, by combining data from the prepress and MIS systems through one portal, live and dynamically using JDF language for the link.

Prism Product Specialist Travis Koger said: "Adare had a specific vision of the ideal workflow and provided that necessary leadership, which created the right momentum from the start. It's also been reassuring to confirm the structure of the WIN MIS has enabled us to answer all Steve's requests in order to realise that vision."

Adare has built on their marketing and corporate communications expertise to provide a single source for all their customers' packaging needs, encompassing all types of printed product and designed to drive down costs via enhanced operational processes, improved products and first class customer service.

The workflow server focuses on automation tools that help prevent errors in the workflow, leading to cost reduction and faster time to market. By interfacing Prism WIN to the workflow server, the preproduction workflow becomes an extension of Adare's supply chain. For example, by allowing critical job parameters to be defined up front, the link to the workflow server eliminates redundant data entry by operators that can lead to incorrect content. In other words, a single point of entry for critical job parameters leads to a considerable efficiency improvement.

When people refer to workflow automation they mean just that: automation, minimising human labour. Highly skilled operators in the Adare supply chain are able to spend their time on complex work rather than the simple, mundane tasks carried out in the background by a sophisticated workflow. And in addition to this, perhaps just as important - an automated workflow reduces the risk of human error!

Adare sees Prism WIN as the controlling factor in their workflow management. Prism WIN creates a job on the pre-production server. Then via JDF, an order entered in the MIS can create a pre-production Job Ticket without double data entry, faxing etc. Information from a label work slip can be pulled, such as the product SKU or barcode, layers, inks and ink coverage, and structural information, among others. The preproduction department automatically receives critical job specifications approved by the Prism WIN user, providing increased efficiency at lower cost. Digital approvals are recorded and automatic status updates (milestones) will occur between both systems where appropriate. These milestones can then be shared with all key users dynamically to allow customer service improvements across the full management team.

The Mark and Finished Goods barcode stored within Prism WIN, and included in the JDF file, allow Adare to set up a barcode ID on the Finished Goods stock code, which is then transferred via the JDF work ticket. The workflow server will then automatically modify any barcode in the Artwork file to have the correct barcode ID.

The Mark is supported by a similar concept. In the Jobbing module in Prism, the CSR has the ability to assign the type of Marks associated with the artwork to be included on the plates that are produced. This information is then also transferred through via JDF for automatic replacement on the artwork file before plate output.

And finally, the Step and Repeat function allows the job to be configured to indicate which way the label is to run and how many labels will be printed on the 'sheet' or on a single cylinder impression. Once again this enables the workflow server to automatically adjust the artwork with the correct number up, removing a lot of work from the studio operator, including time taken to chase the information by phone/email.

As the job progresses through prepress, each milestone being progressed is automatically fed back into Prism WIN, updating the job status dynamically alongside the conventional production performance data from the shop floor. All the production presses and finishing processes are logged into WIN's Virtual Time Management Terminals, although Prism's iQ systems are being assessed for more automated, live data from the key production kit as we speak.

From a production control point of view, Adare's planner has a large LCD screen on a wall displaying Prism WIN's production scheduling Gantt chart. This chart can be viewed by the CSRs, and the colours on the plan change automatically as each task progresses to completion and the job gets ready to run.

The potential is huge, and Adare management see this JDF workflow project as the blueprint for across the business. So Adare's packaging workflow is being used as the test case scenario led by a few very motivated and committed individuals that see the benefits already materialising - imagine the benefits if that success could be transferred across the whole company.